

## PLANNING OBJECTIONS TO PLACES OF WORSHIP

### **40.3 Jamia Mosque, Green Street, Totterdown**

Bristol City Council -  
Planning envelope 62806  
Street file: G66 (Green Street)

Alterations to a former Anglican mission room in use as a mosque since 1968, to give it a mosque-like appearance.

Architect: Glyn Leaman, 24 St John's Road, Clifton Bristol

Description of changes: Addition of prayer rooms and service rooms in a small extension at the east end. Provision of a downstairs hall, imam's flat in an existing range of lower rooms on the south side. External changes: removal of the gables and roof, provision of a reinforced concrete flat roof with central dome of GRP (fibreglass reinforced plastic); addition of a non-functional minaret at the south-west corner; alteration of the Gothic arches of all window and door openings to triangular-pointed heads; covering the brick walls with white render.

Initial plans drawn February 1978. Planning application submitted 30.3.1978. Revised plans submitted in July 1979 (principal changes to internal layout and to the shape of the proposed 'onion' dome). Full planning permission granted 3.10.1979.

Four representations were received from neighbouring residents in Spring 1978. One had no objection to the plans, three were letters of objection. (The original letters are not on file, but were summarised in officers reports.)

Points of objection:

- Disturbance, noise and general nuisance
- The minaret could become a 'wailing tower'
- The proposals would result in the 'desecration of a beautiful church, with a lowering of standards in the community'.
- Intensification of existing parking problems
- The proposed extension would affect light and air to neighbouring properties.

The planning committee received an additional Delegated Report to the revised application on 3.10.1979. Three objections were received, including the general point that 'the area is unsuitable for a mosque', and repeated points about noise nuisance from the minaret.

The application was approved with the condition that the minaret should be "a decorative feature only and shall not be used in any way as a 'wailing tower' for the purpose of calling the faithful to prayer".

In 1998, an application was made by the mosque to add a mortuary or chapel of rest at the rear and E side of the building, in order to store bodies awaiting burial and provide a facility for families to visit.

Five objections were raised. Points of objection included additional parking in an already over-parked street (30.4.1998); overlooking and loss of privacy (11.5.98);

traffic congestion and possible obstruction of emergency vehicle access to Green Street (18.4.98, 20.4.98); and a neighbour in Green Street who complained that she had lived in the house for many years and was now elderly, finishing "I have no wish to spend the rest of my life living in a house facing the entrance to a mortuary." (30.4.1998).

A long debate was conducted by the planners and council officials conducted via reports etc., on the psychological impact of allowing the application, and whether those impacts are a proper matter for planning. Also discussions with the church on the use of such a mortuary, whether it is better described as a chapel of rest, whether there would be any potential for unpleasant smells from the air extraction system, and the length of time bodies are held before burial in the Muslim tradition. Also whether that would allow time for large numbers of extended family to travel distances to visit the deceased, or whether it was a case of quick burial, implying only a few close relatives would have time to visit.

The application was deemed to have lapsed on 28.1.2000, as communication with the mosque had broken down and replies had not been received to various enquiries. It was not possible to tell whether this was due to a change of mind by the Muslim congregation or whether it was a less amicable breakdown of communication.

#### **40.5 Easton Masjid**

Planning files – Street File S/3, St Mark's Road

Petition of October 7, 1987

Report to Planning and Traffic Committee

“A petition has been received with 58 signatories regarding the extension to the Easton Islami Durasgah at St Mark's Road Easton, which was approved under Application No. 0583F/86N by the Planning and Traffic Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1986 unconditionally. The petition reads:

*“ Enclosed are the signatures of nearly 100 Christians, most are former worshippers at St Mark's Church, who are angry and dismayed at the decision given by the Planning Officer to allow St Mark's Church Hall to be used as a reception for Asian corpses. After stringent inquiries, I cannot find any person living in the near vicinity of the Church Hall who has been notified of the “change of use”. This district as a whole, including West Indians and some parts of the Asian community are totally opposed to the use of the hall for the proposed purpose. As a 72 year old citizen, I cannot remember a more insensitive decision, a decision which has taken no regard for the feelings of the indigenous population of this district. This hall, which is next to a food market and opposite a Baptist church and a public house, is totally inadequate for such a use. If a “change of use” was notified to people in the near vicinity, will you please indicate the names of those people and the date notified. I must advise you that the people of this district are determined that this matter shall be investigated and as to what conditions the decision was made.”*

The petitioner was inaccurate in saying that no-one had been consulted, and the council duly supplied the addresses of surrounding properties that had been notified by letter, the consultation date (6-20 March 1986), and the fact that no objections were received. The reply also commented that the relevant Environmental Health legislation would have to be complied with by the mosque.

(photocopy of officers report to planning committee in photocopies file)

**40.8 Asian Community Centre, 41 Sevier Street, St Werburgh's BS2 9QX**

On 19.1.2006, the Islami Darasgah Bristol (40.7) applied for planning permission to use vacant pub premises (formerly Keerney's Irish Bar) at 41 Sevier Street, St Werburgh's, as an Asian Community Centre.

Application No ; 05/04550/F

Full permission was granted on 3 July 2006.

For delegated report see

<http://www.ukplanning.com/ukp/doc/Report-3250222.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=3250222&location=VOLUME3&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=9>

This summarises objections to the application as

- Parking problems
- Likely to increase traffic congestion
- Litter
- Noise and disturbance
- Pollution
- Existence of three commercial premises in the street which already contribute to the above problems
- Already sufficient community facilities in the area, housing should be provided instead
- The surrounding area is 'wasteland' which needs tidying and replanting

Original objectors' letters not on file.

### 60.3 Sikh Temple (Gurdwara Sangat Singh Sabha)

Address: 11 Summerhill Road, St George, Bristol

Objection letter to application 3430F/86S, (for a kitchen and WC extension at the rear of the temple). Original in Street File S/115, Summerhill Road.

*“ People of Redfield  
Church Road  
Bristol 5  
Jan 13<sup>th</sup> [1987]*

*Sir,*

*You and your council cant live in Redfield or you would never consider putting more Asians in our midst. You should be trying to go about your job shoping or just walking up the road when these people use the cultural centre, you cant move for brown people and police and by the way we would very much like to know who pays for all these police what are they there for what do they think is going to happen to these coloured foreigners it only makes us mad when we see the money being spent on these immigrants when we want only one police man we cant get one but when this lot go to the centre you cant move for policemen. We don't want any more centres where we have to see these people we are beginning to hate these people why do they want to have information on there culture if they think so much about why dont they go back, they wont while theres fools like you and your gang falling over each other to spend our money on them. Dont worry about where you are going to open the centre put it next door to where you live that will solve the problem. Were fed up to the teeth at the way you fools are allowed to spend our money on these immigrants but you kick decent English people in the mouth if they ask for a bit of help and it goes against the grain when our brothers have died for the likes of you and your families and we ask for help being told no but let a coloured come to you whose never done a thing for this country but bring murder and rape you just cant do enough for them. Take the boat people they have no rights being here at all but they are brought here and you all fall over each other to get them houses make sure there brats go to a good school but the poor English can go to hell. So dont worry about this centre put it in your road.*

*Bristolions”*

I find it interesting that this letter is so divorced from the facts of the case – if it wasn't on file with the papers for Summerhill Road temple, it would seem not to relate to it at all. No public/council money was being used, it was not a new temple and it is not particularly near the shopping area of Redfield. I wonder if the writer was confused with the Hindu temple which also inhabited a former chapel in the heart of the said shopping area.